

Terrorism probes should target London

by Edward Spannaus

Just as President Clinton was about to dispatch his special envoy Dennis Ross to the Middle East, a new round of terrorist attacks occurred, with the obvious aim of disrupting the U.S. President's efforts to get the peace process back on track. Most prominent were the July 30 suicide bombing in a crowded Jerusalem marketplace, which killed 15 people and wounded scores more; and the arrests in New York City the next day, which, it is claimed, prevented a suicide bombing in the New York City subways which could have killed dozens, if not hundreds.

A cynical cry was immediately raised, blaming Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian Authority for both incidents—even though it is clear that such terrorist attacks aim to destroy the peace process on which Arafat has staked his existence. At an Aug. 6 press conference, President Clinton acknowledged this, declaring that the “closest allies” of the terrorists “may be their most extreme enemies in Israel who do not believe that peace is possible.”

Nor is there any evidence that the Jerusalem suicide bombers came from territories under Arafat's control: In fact, the indications are to the contrary, that they did *not* come from the West Bank or Gaza. Nor was there any evidence whatsoever to show that the New York suspects had any ties to any Islamic terrorist group.

Any competent investigation would begin—as *EIR* has declared time and time again—by targetting London as the center of international terrorism. (See, e.g., *EIR* April 4, 1997.)

At the same time as all this was going on, a far more fruitful track was being ignored. In federal court in Manhattan, the second trial of Ramzi Yousef, the alleged mastermind of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, was beginning. However, the trial is expected to focus very narrowly on the issue of Yousef's role in the 1993 bombing, not on broader issues concerning who is behind Yousef, and who is financing the wave of terrorism he admits having been involved in.

Yousef is known to be part of the “Afgansi” network which has been responsible for a major portion of international terrorism in recent years. The core of this group is made up of veterans of the decade-long war of resistance against the Soviets in Afghanistan in the 1980s, a war which was directed by British and U.S. intelligence and military services. After warfare against the Soviets ended, British

intelligence picked up these networks of trained killers and bombers, and it has been deploying them ever since, under the cover of “Islamic terrorism.”

A major bankroller of the Afghansi networks is the Saudi dissident ex-patriate Osama bin Laden. The London-based bin Laden has taken credit for the two recent bombings of U.S. bases in Saudi Arabia, and has directly threatened U.S. military personnel, and even President Clinton directly. In a May 11 interview broadcast on Cable News Network, bin Laden raved: “The hearts of Muslims are filled with hatred toward the American President. The President has a heart that knows no words. . . . Our people in the Arabian Peninsula will send him messages with no words.”

Last year, the U.S. State Department reported that Ramzi Yousef had resided, for three years, at the bin Laden-funded “house of martyrs” in Peshawar, Pakistan—a center of “Afghansi” networks. However, reports are that none of this evidence will be presented at the ongoing Yousef trial in New York.

The *Washington Times* and the London *Sunday Telegraph* reported that bin Laden's financial director has been in Saudi custody since May, and has revealed information concerning bin Laden's financing of terrorist groups operating in the United States via London. According to intelligence sources, the information has enabled FBI investigators to trace money that originated with the bin Laden organization in Pakistan and Afghanistan, to bank accounts in London and Detroit, and then ultimately making its way to New Jersey and New York. It is also reported that there is currently a federal grand jury investigation of bin Laden in New York.

The New York link

Meanwhile, the case of the two New York suspects arrested on July 31 keeps getting stranger and stranger. Law enforcement investigators say that the two had no links to any known terrorist groups, and no strong political or religious convictions. A trace of phone calls made from pay phones near their apartment has shown no links to Hamas or any terrorist group. “The more we look at these two guys, the less they look like suicide bombers,” a senior law enforcement investigator is quoted in the Aug. 5 *New York Times* as saying. Those who were in contact with the two, say that all they were interested in was women and money. “They're not exactly living the religious life, looking to die for Allah,” commented another investigator.

Indeed, the two hapless suspects looked like patsies, at best. One lead which surfaced in the *New York Post* on the day after the arrests, and then disappeared in all the hubbub about “Hamas,” was that the owner of the supposed bomb factory where the arrests took place, is a Pakistani known to be tied to Ramzi Yousef's “Afghansi” circles. There were also reports that an Israeli intelligence organization had previously attempted to recruit of one of the suspects as an informant.